

Girls' Night In by Thei

Series: [Babysitting \[2\]](#)

Category: Stranger Things (TV 2016)

Genre: (but secret), Babysitting, Established Relationship, Harringrove, Jane Knows, M/M, Max is starting to find out, Surprise Dates, cancelled dates, horrible decisions concerning dinner, something short and uncomplicated

Language: English

Characters: Billy Hargrove, Eleven | Jane Hopper, Jim "Chief" Hopper, Maxine "Max" Mayfield, Steve Harrington, also Neil and Susan are mentioned but don't play a huge part

Relationships: (also heavily implied), (heavily implied) - Relationship, Billy Hargrove/Steve Harrington, Joyce Byers/Jim "Chief" Hopper

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Summary:

“William Hargrove”, Hopper said.

“Uh. Yes sir.”

Billy looked nervous, but only to someone who knew him well. Max herself wouldn't have recognized it a couple of months ago.

“How would you like to do me a favor, William?”

Girls' Night In

Billy was walking around with a thundering expression, and had done so ever since Neil had informed him that whatever plans he had for the evening would have to be cancelled, because Neil and Susan were going out so Billy would have to drive Max to, and then home from, her friend's house. Billy's objections had been brutally shut down, and even though Max had tried to say that she could take her skateboard – because she didn't want any trouble – it was for nothing. Neil had made up his mind.

"Susan talked to the girl's father", Neil said with a voice that didn't leave room for arguments, "and they agreed that Max'll have dinner there, so you can drive her over at six, and then pick her up around nine thirty, since it's not a school night."

Billy had stalked out into the hallway where the phone was to call whatever girl he was meeting to cancel, and had looked like he was one step away from snarling at everyone for the rest of the day.

Now, Max avoided looking at Billy, afraid that he would take it out on her somehow. She hadn't been scared of Billy in a long time, but he could still be an asshole with a short temper – even though he'd been acting better, lately. Sometimes he could even be fun to be around. Almost like how he was in the beginning, when Susan and Neil started dating.

Her mom and Neil were getting ready, but were still home at a quarter to six, when it was time to go. She hugged her mom, grabbed her backpack and skateboard, and went out the front door. She hadn't seen Billy in the house for half an hour, but he was already in the front seat of the Camaro, waiting for her.

She jumped in the passenger seat and put on her seatbelt, and Billy started the car without a word. She glanced over, but he didn't look angry. She couldn't quite place the look on his face. It was ... disappointment, maybe. Whatever it was, it made her feel bad.

"I'm sorry", she said, quietly. He tensed at her voice, and she hurried to continue, "I can take my skateboard home later, you don't have to

pick me up. You can go on your date. Neil won't have to know."

He didn't take his eyes away from the road, but he sighed. "No, it's okay. I'll pick you up. I cancelled, anyway."

"Maybe you could un-cancel?"

Billy's lips actually twitched at that, but he shook his head. "No, they had something else to do, apparently. It's okay, though. Some other time."

It sounded like he was convincing himself rather than her, and she felt guilty.

"Still", she said, turning to look out the window. "I'm sorry."

And for a while, she thought that that was the end of their conversation. Until he said, in a low voice, "Not your fault."

When they got into town, she had to direct him, as he'd never driven to Jane's before. He raised a doubting eyebrow when they had to park the car and walk the rest of the way through the woods, but he didn't say anything. Just locked the car and walked after her through the trees.

"Watch the trip wire."

"The *what*?"

Max ignored him and bounded up the steps to the cabin. She knocked, and the door opened just as Billy walked up next to her, revealing a somewhat disheveled Jim Hopper. Max felt, more than saw, Billy tense up beside her. A glance revealed wide eyes and raised shoulders.

"Hi Hop!" she said when neither of them spoke.

"Hi Max. Uh. Jane's inside, I'm ... Come in."

He walked to the side, letting her in, but then his eyes narrowed as he watched Billy, who hadn't moved an inch.

“William Hargrove.”

“Uh. Yes sir.”

Billy looked nervous, but only to someone who knew him well. Max herself wouldn't have recognized it a couple of months ago.

“How would you like to do me a favor, William?”

Billy looked like a deer in headlights. Max almost laughed out loud.

“What kind of favor?”

“I'm going out, and the babysitter's late. Would you mind staying for a bit, keep an eye on the girls? Just until the sitter gets here. It shouldn't be too long, twenty minutes maybe.”

Max watched the two of them. Billy still hadn't moved from his place on the porch, but when Hopper raised his arm to motion for him to come inside, he backed up a step. Hopper frowned a little as if it bothered him – then again, Hopper was always frowning so maybe he was just stressed.

Billy licked his lips and shrugged, a gesture way too casual to be real. “Yeah, sure. I don't mind.”

He glanced over at Max, and she imagined that if they'd been alone, he'd have quipped “It's not like I have plans anymore”. As it was, though, he just squared his shoulders and managed a smile.

“Good man”, Hopper said and clapped him on the shoulder. Billy tensed up and looked like he regretted his answer already, as Hopper steered him into the cabin.

“Jane!” he bellowed, making Billy flinch.

Max noticed that Hopper never let go of Billy's shoulder, but she didn't give it any more thought because Jane emerged from another room, face lighting up when she saw them both.

“Hi Jane!”

“Hello Max.” She turned her gaze towards Billy. “Hello Billy.”

“Hi, kid.”

“Oh, I didn’t realize that you two knew each other already?” Hopper managed to sound both curious and thoughtful when he turned to look at Billy, who paled.

Max took pity on him. “Billy’s been hanging with Steve some when the Party’s been hanging out.”

“Steve?” Hopper said, eyebrows raised. “Steve Harrington?”

“Yeah. I mean yes, sir.”

Hopper looked thoughtful for a moment, until he glanced at his wrist watch and swore. “Right. I have to go. Jane, there’s food in the fridge. Max, make yourself at home. Billy – can I call you Billy?”

“Uh. Sure.”

“If you’re hungry you can help yourself to whatever before you go. Thanks for doing this. The sitter should be here soon to help them with dinner. Just make sure they don’t burn the place down before he gets here.”

Billy nodded and relaxed a bit when Hopper let go of his shoulder to walk across the room and pull on his jacket. A muffled “alright, bye” later, and he hurried out the door, leaving the three of them alone. Billy looked a little uncomfortable being in an unknown house, but Max had been here before so she had no qualms going into the tiny kitchen and open the refrigerator.

“What’s for dinner?” she asked, poking her head inside.

Jane appeared next to her, a small smile on her face, pulling out a familiar box. “Eggos.”

Max grinned at her friend. “The guys weren’t kidding then. You really like them!”

Jane nodded, smiling.

“Eggos aren’t dinner, kid.” Billy had apparently followed them into the kitchen and now peered over their heads into the refrigerator. “At least not by themselves. What else have you got?”

Ten minutes later found them at the kitchen table, Billy having gone through all the cupboards and muttered to himself about the deplorable state of them – but somehow having managed to scrounge up every sugary treat that Hopper had, probably. The Eggos were therefore served with an unhealthy amount of chocolate sauce, sprinkles and gummy bears, of all things.

“There you go”, he said as he put a plate in front of each of them. “Dinner.”

At their stares, he grinned. “What? He said to ‘help ourselves’, and it’s the weekend. Live a little, girls.”

Max and Jane looked at each other, then shrugged. This was far from ordinary food, but who were they to turn down such a treat?

There was a knock at the door, and Billy went to open it, grabbing his jacket on the way over. Max expected him to leave now, when the sitter had gotten here and he didn’t have a reason to stay any longer. What she *didn’t* expect was the startled laugh that came from the door.

“Steve!?”

“Billy! What are you doing here?”

“I ... Max needed a ride, and then the Chief wanted me to stay until the babysitter showed up. I ... what are *you* doing here?”

“I’m the babysitter!”

“No shit.”

“Yeah, when you–“

Steve, who’d walked inside by now and closed the door behind him, glanced over to the kitchen where Max and Jane were watching the exchange. He cleared his throat.

"I had plans, but they fell through, so when Hopper called and needed a sitter, I figured ... why not, right?"

"Right."

Steve nodded to the girls and raised a hand in greeting. "Hey, guys!"

"Hello."

"Hi, Steve!"

"We made Eggos. Do you want some?"

Steve laughed. "Thanks but no thanks. I ate before I got here. You guys finish your dinner, me and Billy will be right over here."

Max turned her attention back to her plate, but it didn't escape her that Billy had hung his jacket over the back of a chair. He was smiling, and seemed to be in no hurry to leave now when Steve was there.

"Date", Jane said.

Both boys stiffened and looked over. Then Steve laughed – a little nervously, maybe – and said, "Yeah, now that you mention it, Hopper did say he was gonna meet with Joyce Byers ..." He turned to Billy. "Wanna ... watch some TV while they eat?"

Billy cleared his throat and nodded. "Yeah. Sure."

Jane looked smug. "Date", she whispered conspiratorially to Max before stuffing a huge bite of waffle and gummy bears into her mouth.

Max nodded. Hopper and Joyce? It made sense. She ate, and the talked a little with Jane, and she idly wondered if the fact that Hopper and Joyce were on a date would mean that Jane and Will would become siblings at some point, like her and Billy were. Or, like her and Billy were supposed to be – *could* be, at least, if Billy wasn't being such an ass all the time.

She took a bite of her dinner and glanced into the living room area.

The boys had sat down in the sofa, an arm-length between them. The TV was on, but they weren't watching. Instead, they were turned so they were facing each other and seemed to be talking in low voices. Billy was sitting with his back to the kitchen, so Max couldn't see his face, but she could tell that he was more relaxed than she'd seen him today. Steve would say something and smile, and Billy would tilt his head and reply, and Steve's eyes would crinkle with mirth. And Billy, who was standing around awkwardly not ten minutes ago, now stretched out in the sofa next to Steve like he owned it. It was like all the tension and anger had bled out of him, leaving behind a softer version of Billy.

Was that Steve's doing? If so, Max wouldn't mind if they hung out every day.

Jane caught her looking and smiled while scraping the last of the chocolate sauce from her plate.

"Date", she whispered again, and this time, something in her voice made Max frown. Jane didn't say much, but she'd learned long ago that what Jane *did* say, was worth taking seriously. Jane noticed a lot of things that no one else did.

Max looked over to the sofa, where Steve and Billy were. Had they moved closer together, or was it just in her imagination? Could Jane have meant—?

Just then, Billy stiffened and turned to the kitchen, eyes wide.

"Shit", he said. "Steve, I'm so sorry."

Steve frowned. "What are you sorry for?"

"I fucked up, Steve. I didn't know you were the sitter!"

"What are you talking about? How did you fuck up?"

Billy hid his face in his hands and groaned. "I fed them every ounce of sugar I could find."

Silence followed, in which both Steve and Billy turned – slowly – to look at Max and Jane who were sitting with their empty plates by the

kitchen table. Max felt giddy – and sure, it could have been the sugar, but it could also be the beginning of some kind of realization – so she gave them a little wave and grinned evilly.

Out of the corner of her eye, she saw Jane mimic her.

Steve and Billy visibly paled.

Author's Note:

The first part of this series was so easy to write, and I had today off so I thought I'd see if I could write another Babysitting fic, as well. And lo and behold, I could!

(Also, English isn't my first language, so if you see something that needs correcting, feel free to let me know so I can change it.)